

HARVARD CRIMSON (MA)
22 January 1986

FILE ONLY

Safran: Anti-Semitism Prompted Criticism

By MICHAEL W. HIRSCHORN

Professor Nadav Safran, who will resign as head of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies this spring following an investigation of his handling of more than \$150,000 in Central Intelligence Agency grants, has charged that a number of attacks on him were motivated by anti-Semitism.

Safran, an Egyptian-born Jew who has lived in the United States since 1950, said in an interview in the current issue of the weekly Jewish Advocate that his opponents tried to use "the Jewish factor" against him. He cited the attacks as an example "of how my opponents and enemies reached for whatever they could hit me with."

The charges mark the first time the professor has explicitly linked the outcry over his actions to anti-Semitism arising out of the Arab-Israeli conflict, a conflict many Middle East scholars say has penetrated the ivory tower.

The interview also marks Safran's first extensive comment on his case since press reports last October chronicled his surreptitious acceptance of \$45,700 from the CIA for a conference on Islam and Muslim politics and \$107,430 in CIA money to research a book on Saudi Arabia.

The interview sheds no new light on Harvard's recently concluded investigation into the grants, but does provide some interesting insight into Safran's thinking about the controversy.

In accepting the \$107,430 grant, Safran violated University rules by giving the CIA censorship rights on publication of his research and agreeing not to publicly acknowledge the CIA funding. The research resulted in the publication last September of "Saudi Arabia: The

Ceaseless Quest for Security," by the Harvard University Press.

The case has stirred up a storm within Harvard and the academic community over the propriety both of accepting agency grants for research in such a volatile area as the Middle East and of keeping such funding secret.

The reports prompted a three-month probe by Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences A. Michael Spence. In a December 30 report, Spence announced that Safran—who will retain the tenured professorship he has held since 1964—would resign the research center's directorship at the end of June.

The report exonerated Safran for his handling of the 1982 book contract, because the professor is said to have sent then-Dean of the Faculty Henry Rosovsky a copy of the contract and informed him of potential problems with the terms of the agreement. Regarding the \$45,700 conference contract, the report criticized Safran for failing to notify properly the University or conference participants of the CIA funding.

Allegations

Safran, who has refused comment to The Crimson since the newspaper first disclosed the CIA funding in October, said in the interview with the Jewish Advocate that "people made the wildest allegations—among other things, that my being Jewish is somehow related to the CIA funding and a conference on Islam and politics in the contemporary world."

"They implied that I as a Jew am hostile to Islam, which is absurd, it's utter nonsense," Safran said.

However, Safran did criticize The Boston Globe for publishing a report that the professor in 1948 and 1949 was one of the heads of the Israeli

Shin Beth, a precursor to the Mossad, Israel's equivalent to the CIA.

The information came from a September 27, 1985 letter to the editor of the Israeli newspaper Ha'Aretz, which was translated for The Globe. A translated copy of the letter, which also was sent anonymously to The Crimson, said, "Professor Nadav Safran...was also one of the heads of the security services and one of the supporters of Ben Gurion." David Ben Gurion became the first prime minister of Israel in 1948.

In the newly published interview, Safran called the allegation that he headed the security forces "utter nonsense and untruth." He continued: "In 1948 when the war broke out, I was 22. I had been a kibbutznik, and I joined the Palmach [a division of Israel's defense forces] as a private. I ended my service a year and a half later as a first lieutenant."

Another Example

Safran did not identify in the Advocate interview any of the "people" who had connected his Jewishness with the CIA funding. But yesterday, Laurie A. Mylroie, an assistant director of the Middle East Center, pointed to a short article by Thomas Stauffer in the English-based journal Middle East International when asked to cite an example of anti-Semitism in the attacks on Safran.

The October 25, 1985 journal article said that The Crimson disclosures exposed "an unexpected political triangle involving Harvard University, Israel, and the CIA."

Stauffer, a former associate of the center who left Harvard before Safran assumed the directorship in 1982, asked in the article: "Why did the CIA choose Nadav Safran for these projects given his demonstrable lack of expertise in the field?" He then wrote: "The rationale is indeed puzzling unless this pattern of support represents an effort within the CIA to build legitimacy for a Middle East programme which is otherwise characterised as 'anti-Arab' and 'pro-Zionist'."

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Stauffer could not be reached for comment yesterday.

In the extensive interview with the Boston-based weekly, Safran offered a wide-ranging defense of his actions and said that Spence's report "exonerated me..."

Safran conceded he "had made an error in not informing the participants invited to the conference as soon as the CIA funding came into the picture."

The interview also sheds no new light on the question of how Safran first came to discuss CIA funding for his book in 1982. Safran has insisted that a meeting with the CIA agent came after the agent "dropped by" his office.

Asked by the Advocate interviewer, "Now, the CIA doesn't just 'drop by' people's offices—someone had to know you," Safran responded, "Yes it does."